

# COMMERCIAL UNION AN AFTER-THE-WAR SAFETY VALVE

By P. W. Wilson

American Correspondent of "The London Daily News"

ORD ROBERT CECIL'S memorandum on trade after the war sweeps the resolutions of the Paris Conference into the limbo where already moulder the secret treaties published by Lenin and Trotsky. It means that, in this matter as in some others, the entrance of the United States into the struggle enables us to start afresh. The valor of our troops, now so fully shared at such severe sacrifice by the American army, can be recompensed only by a settlement of world affairs in which the one compelling motive shall be the happiness and unity of mankind.

## What Is Meant By Commerce

For a hundred years since Waterloo Europe has been tortured by the constant anxiety and frequent calamity of a divided condition. If the world is to be split up again into fragments, each carrying on against the other a futile and pitiless competition in trade, in armaments, and in colonial expansion, the war will have been fought in vain. Life will be no more happy and secure than it was in the early months of 1914. Indeed, the fever will have spread from the old world to the new and from the new world it will inevitably infect the vast populations of China and India.

There must be, therefore, a solution of the question, What is meant by commerce? Is it mutual destruction or is it mutual service?

The latter is my belief. The trade of every country stimulates the trade of all the others. It is to the interest of every country, therefore, to see trade developed among its neighbors. For seventy years Great Britain has acted on this principle. When the test came she was for three years the financial bulwark of

the alliance against the Central Powers. Similarly, it has been the abolition of economic boundaries within the United States—the free exchange of agricultural products from the West for manufactures from the East—which has developed your own vast country in so marvelous a manner. The American Republic is to-day the largest commercial unit in the world, and the reason is that the frontiers of her forty-eight states are free for railroads and goods.

## Unifying Eighty Nationalities

In Europe there is no one citizenship. I am told that eighty nationalities can be traced, and these are localized, not intermingled. The Bretons in France, the Basques in Spain, the Bohemians, the Flemings in Belgium are cases in point. Most of us believe in the small nation. We owe art to Greece, and religion to Judea. It was Rome, as a small nation, that gave us Roman law. Ireland has contributed song and lyric and idyll. The England of Shakespeare, of the Authorized Version of the Bible, of Milton and Bunyan was small. The America of Washington, Jefferson and Franklin was still small.

We need variety. Boston ought to differ from Detroit; humanity ought to be made up of all sorts. Providence has marked out the boundaries wherein men of distinct races may dwell.

But if big empires like Russia as she used to be and Austria-Germany as she is to-day are to be avoided, the small nations, while preserving their individuality must cooperate with each other. For purposes of trade they must form themselves into commercial unions. It was when the German states did this

## Without League of Nations Europe Would Be Nearly as Insecure as in 1914—Whether Germany Comes In or Stays Out She Will Lose Her Predominance as Mischief Maker

that they became formidable. And it is the fear of commercial disintegration that helps to hold Germany together.

I write thus frankly because, as it seems to me, the particularism of certain national movements may imperil their success. I am all for Poland, Czechoslovakia, Jugo-Serbia and the rest, but if these heroic little peoples intend to erect ring fences around themselves and hold each other at arm's length, fostering jealousy and suspicion rather than friendship and cooperation, then, inevitably, a League of Nations on a broad plan becomes difficult, if not impossible. In Posen Germany has tried to force one nationality, her own, on another, the Poles. In Bohemia I am told that nearly 60,000 persons of both sexes and all ages have been killed by Austria for so-called "sedition." That is bad, it is abhorrent to our every feeling of justice and humanity. But voluntary interchange of racial characteristics should not be discouraged. Inter-marriage helps international amity. The British are strong,—Americans are strong because their ancestry is mixed. Our common language spreads because it can absorb new phrases and idioms. It is less pure than other tongues. It is mongrel. But it is adaptable—receptive and not exclusive—hospitable.

With autocracy still organized democracy must avoid watertight compartments. We cannot afford misunderstandings. We must be members, one of another.

Let me give one or two illustra-



tions. Every sovereign state has the right to impose tariffs. But does any one seriously doubt that the progress of South America would be accelerated if she were to establish a commercial union? Is it not true that jealousies between the South American republics have been fomented by trade restrictions along boundaries? Indeed, it is precisely these restrictions which make the delimitation of territory so important a matter.

Take the case of Monastir. Fifteen years ago I was the treasurer of the Balkan Committee in England which worked for the liberation of Macedonia, which includes this town. We held it to be beyond argument that Macedonia belonged to Bulgaria just as the Trentino belongs to Italy. Serbia then came along and contended that such an allocation would sever the railway which unites her with Greece and

would thus make Bulgaria the dominant power in the Balkans. Goods could be stopped on the frontier and railroad cars held up.

On these grounds the second Balkan war broke out, which left Bulgaria with a sense of grievance and made it impossible for the Western powers to win her support. This entire situation would have been avoided if the Balkan peninsula had frankly accepted internal free trade. That plan would also have solved the problem of Kavala, which happens to be a port on the Aegean Sea, inhabited by Greeks, but the gateway to Bulgaria. There also democracy was weakened by the sharp conflict between race and commercial necessity, and the same remark applies to Salonica, which is the terminal of the Serbian railway, but is also held by Greece.

Small nations are rightly jealous of their independence. But we must

define independence. The day is coming when you will be able to take a ticket at Vladivostok and travel continuously, via Jerusalem to Cape Town in South Africa or via Paris to Perth in Scotland. The Suez Canal is already abridged. The English Channel will soon be tunneled. The old free traders may have pressed things too far when they argued that one country would be devoted almost wholly to agriculture while another would be almost wholly manufacturing. We are learning that every country, when fully developed, can be a Jack-of-all-trades. But we are also finding out that the supply of raw materials and even of food depends on international agreement and that no nation, however powerful, can regard itself any longer as independent of others.

## Commercial Union As a Safety Valve

Germany herself, despite her close touch with a helpless Russia, is discovering that the twenty-four Allies can strangle her in time of peace merely by withholding metals and other products. If that is the position of the most powerful isolated country in the world, how could Bohemia expect to survive except as a member of an international family? In the case of Serbia before the war, it was the custom of Austria-Hungary to bring pressure to bear by raising tariffs against Serbian exports, and especially pigs. A Serbian tariff against Austria was no remedy. But if Serbia had enjoyed commercial union with the rest of the Balkans, to say nothing of the rest of the Allies, she would have been secure of markets which would have rendered her independent of her hostile neighbor.

Again, small nations can only survive under guarantee of the world at large. That was the case with Belgium. Now, if the young men who live by the Mississippi are to be liable for military service in defense of Rumanians who live by the Danube, is it not reasonable that the Rumanians shall observe general regulations designed to minimize the risks of future war? Is the obligation to be all on one side and not on the other? This question is the more pertinent because it so happens that at the small nations dominate a considerable part of the European seaboard. You have Norway and Sweden, you have Denmark, you have Belgium and Holland, Portugal and Spain, the Balkans, and in Asia you have the Near East. Before the war France and Britain guaranteed the integrity of Belgium. Would it have been quite fair of the Belgians, presuming on this guarantee, to close the Scheldt against Central Europe and impose prohibitive railway rates? Surely Belgium was wise in recognizing the obligation to allow through traffic to all nations. Individual nations must understand that there is an international aspect to human life.

Every country must decide its own fiscal policy. Great Britain adheres to free trade. With labor increasing its influence I believe that she will continue to do so. I know that various inquiries have led to recommendations along protective lines. In our country that is no new phenomenon. And the impulse in this, as in previous cases, is anti-German sentiment. Obviously, we can have no wish to erect fences against France and Italy and yourselves.

## Great Britain And Free Trade

Some people would like to see a threefold tariff consisting of prohibitive duties against Germany, lower duties against Allies and friendly neutrals, and still lower duties against our own colonies. It is a pretty scheme, but my belief is that it will not survive parliamentary discussion. Moreover, labor will demand that all industries fostered by such protection shall hand over their profits, so derived, to the community. Protection with us

would thus mean meticulous state control of commercial undertakings, with the workmen auditing the books. This being so, I don't think that the United Kingdom will be responsible for any obstacles to whatever international agreement as to commerce may be proposed by the United States.

Countries which already have tariffs must find it difficult to modify them. In our own case it meant a struggle bordering on revolution. After the war prices in the United States and wages will prove to have been inflated. Until things have righted themselves there may be an actual demand for higher duties at the ports. In Britain we have to face precisely the same financial artificiality, but if I were asked to mention the most important single result of the war I should refer to the patriotic acceptance by all classes of Americans of the income tax. That changes your entire approach to world finance. It means that your indirect taxation becomes of secondary importance.

## Trade Alliance The Real Victory

Lord Robert Cecil's statement does not imply that any commercial union is yet established between the twenty-four democratic belligerents. In your own case no such treaty would be possible without the approval of Congress. A gentleman's agreement is all that can be expected at the moment.

But it is a significant fact that we are to-day talking about allocation of food and raw materials, about public instead of private exploitation of natural resources in undeveloped countries, about an international debt at low interest, an international marine, an international postoffice and international conferences to manage them all. Such an alliance will be the real victory over Germany and whatever powers are so foolish as to cling to Germany.

Whether Germany comes in or stays out she will lose her former predominance as mischief maker in Christendom. Whether her rôle be pariah or partner, she will have ceased to tyrannize. And her rulers know this. It is the reason why they dislike the League of Nations.

# FRENCH-CANADIANS IN U. S. LOYAL SUPPORTERS OF WAR

## "Quebec Question" Never Brought Across Border—Buy Bonds, Thrift Stamps, Do Red Cross Work and Send Sons to Army Service

By G. McAllister Aird

HUNDREDS of French-Canadians have come over from Quebec to Maine to escape conscription in Canada; other hundreds of them have returned from the United States to Canada to volunteer for service in the Canadian army; more than hundreds of them are enlisting with the British and Canadian Recruiting Mission in this country; and finally, thousands and tens of thousands of them are offering themselves as soldiers to Uncle Sam.

But what of the other French-Canadians here? What of those who are not included in the statements given above? In view of the reported conditions in Quebec, brought about by the Nationalists and their "prophet," Mr. Henri Bourassa, who are also, no doubt, responsible for the "runaways" in Maine, their attitude to the war assumes considerable interest. Are the other French-Canadians in the United States standing aloof from the great issue, or are they loyally backing the enlisted men and the volunteers who have taken and are taking up the fight to overthrow the militarism of Germany?

2,000,000 in U. S.  
Mostly in New England

Numerically considered, there are in this country nearly 2,000,000 French-Canadians, their greatest strength being in New England, especially in the mill districts. Some of them, however, can be found in every state of the Union, where they or their fathers have sought their homes with a calmness of determination to settle wherever fort-

une to them seemed to offer the greatest advantage.

In a recent visit through New England, to the cities known as typically expressive of French-Canadian life in the United States, it was my good fortune to talk with people who claim Canada as their own place of birth or as the native land of their fathers, whose "forefathers" came from rugged Normandy and Brittany, and who should, according to an historian of their nation, "have much in common with the people of the British islands."

"What about the French-Canadians in Rhode Island? Are they in sympathy with the policies of the government at this time?" I asked Aram Pothier, a native of Three Rivers, Quebec, a man who has been Mayor of Woonsocket, a representative in the Legislature of Rhode Island, a Lieutenant Governor of his state, and for six years the Governor of that state.

In response to the question, his smile was quite as unmistakable as that of William Howard Taft, whose autographed picture hung upon a wall of the study in the ex-Governor's house in Woonsocket, R. I., where Mr. Pothier and I were seated. "There is but one thought among us," he answered after a little, "and that is to stand with the government. The French-Canadians in Rhode Island and in the rest of the United States are loyal to this country. Any other thought by them would be foolishness."

"Here in Woonsocket, Mr. Pothier, where I am told there are 20,000 French-Canadians in a population of 44,000, how are they expressing their loyalty?"

"By buying Liberty Loan bonds and Thrift Stamps; by working morning, noon and night for the Red Cross, and by sending their sons to fight for their country. But you must meet the Mayor of our city, who will be able to give you exact figures about all of these things."

The Mayor, Adélar Archambault, was also born in Quebec, and, although he is in sympathy with the Nationalists of Canada, he was unhesitating in his assertion of the loyalty of his countrymen under the Stars and Stripes to the cause of the Allies as represented by President Wilson. He it was who told me that 68 per cent of the men who have left Woonsocket for the front have been volunteers, and that that

percentage has been largely French-Canadian.

## Quebec Question Is Not Brought Here

"When Woonsocket has its parades and its public meetings for patriotic purposes, the flags of the Allies fly together?" I concluded.

"Oh, yes," agreed Mr. Archambault. "You are thinking of Quebec. The question in Quebec is not a question which concerns the loyalty of the French-Canadians in the United States."

"The peasants in Quebec think as their priests think, politically and religiously," I had been told by French-Canadian clergy. "The peasants do not have time to read the news of the world in papers or in magazines. They get up early and they go to bed early, and they work all the time between. Besides, some of them cannot read. They must depend upon the priests to do their reading for them."

"What is your influence in this country upon the thinking of your parishioners? Is it of such weight as it is among the peasants of Quebec?" I ventured.

"No," was the answer. "Conditions here are different."

In Woonsocket there are five French-Canadian parishes to prove that in general the French-Canadians keep the faith of their fathers, the Roman Catholic religion. The priests in these parishes are working with a high degree of willingness to have their churches make records above the average for the Red Cross and for enlistments in the army and navy. They are not telling the men in their several parishes to stay at home to conserve the man power of the country and along with it the natural resources, in order that there may be a sufficient strength among them after the war has done its worst to other nations to make within the United States a French-Canadian republic. They are bidding the men and the women, too, to do their duty in the need of the hour.

## A Prayer for Those Who Went to War

As I was leaving the city from the window of the trolley car in which I was riding I caught sight of a church, topped by the Latin Catholic cross and bearing above its main doorway an inscription in



Mr. and Mrs. George Savoy, who were first in the United States to send aid to Belgium. The father and mother of Mr. Savoy came from Quebec, and Mrs. Savoy was born in that province.



French. In English it is: "God protect our young soldiers who have gone to war." Above the inscription hung a service flag on which were 164 stars.

Holyoke, Mass., the "Paper City," as it has been named, because of its numerous paper mills, is of decided interest as a French-Canadian locality. There are other mills besides those in which paper is manufactured, and there are numerous factories to induce 65,000 people to find in it a place for business opportunity. Eighteen thousand French-Canadians give color to its municipal direction, but the Irish execute its laws. Only one French-Canadian, so far as I was able to discover, holds an important political position in the city affairs of Holyoke, but he has held that position for twenty-one years. I am referring to Pierre Bonvouloir, the city treasurer, a trusted supporter of the war activities of the United States.

One of the directors of a big paper mill of Holyoke and Montreal is George Savoy, whose parents were born in Canada's French province and whose wife is proud to be known as a daughter of Quebec. Heart and soul the Savoyes are with the government at this time. Their home in Holyoke is the centre of various interests which have been called into being by the conflict in Europe. Such, indeed, was the case

before our country's entrance into the war, Mrs. Savoy being the first among the women of the United States to plan for aid and to send it to Belgium. "In Montreal," she informed me, "Mr. Savoy had met Mr. Vandervelde, of the first Belgian Relief Commission, and had arranged with him to have supplies sent across to Belgium. Before forming an organization in Holyoke we French-Canadian women began our task of getting together all the garments to be had. In a very few days we were able to send several cases of supplies to the war stricken Belgians. There was then in the United States no Belgian Relief Committee. With us, and with the rest of the country, that organization came later."

The relief work for the Belgians, was, as we know, discontinued after a time, but other relief work took its place in Woonsocket among the French-Canadian women, as it did among the women of other nationalities—first, through the divisions for the making of surgical dressings, and later through the chapters of the Red Cross.

## Priest Opposes German Propaganda

Father Geleneau, of the Parish of the Precious Blood, in the "Paper City," is among the most energetic workers for the charities in sympathy with the fight against the

## Two Million, Chiefly in New England Mill Districts, Declared by Their Leaders To Be Unit for Overthrow of German Militarism

Hun. Openly he opposes any propaganda which aims to weaken in any way the cause of the Allies. Although he was born in Massachusetts, his home influences were very decidedly French-Canadian, his forebears having been born and brought up in Quebec, and in Quebec he received his college training before going to Rome. "He is all the time a worker," was the comment of one of his parishioners concerning him. "And his work counts," the same person went on. "Recently, in the third Liberty Loan drive, he discovered that among 1,000 families in his parish \$162,000 had been subscribed in the three loan campaigns. Of course, the other priests in the parish and in all the parishes work. In this particular parish the families who gave are nearly all mill workers, and they really had to stint themselves to do so much to help the boys who have gone to the trenches. To be sure, many of their own boys have gone, for 620 French-Canadians have marched away to the cantonments thus far from this city; altogether from this city 2,300 have gone to train to be soldiers."

"What does the French-Canadian mother say to her son when the call comes to save his country?" I asked Father Geleneau. "In this country, she says," he answered me, "il te faut faire ta part." (It is necessary for you to do your part.)

In Holyoke I met Joseph Lussier, managing editor of "La Justice," a newspaper printed in French and having a wide circulation among the French-Canadians south of the St. Lawrence, who do not agree with the Bourassa type of politics. At one time in Quebec Mr. Lussier was the political opponent for office of Mr. Bourassa, designated by many natives of his own province and former associates as the "firebrand of Quebec," and as the man whose "one-idea-ed obsession has done the greatest injury to the name of Quebec." Mr. Lussier is a Conservative in politics and a believer in the firm controlling hand in matters relating to public welfare. "No half-measures should be used with the men or the women who endanger lives with propaganda of any kind that antagonizes governmental principles," is his opinion.

Probably Rumford, Me., may be taken as a very good example of the villages, towns and cities of the border state in which the "runaways" earlier mentioned in this article believed that they would receive sympathy, perhaps, and "safe harbors." Eugene Jalbert, of Woonsocket, vouches for this story from Rumford: "At a recent meeting in the town the French-Canadians gave a positive expression of their enthusiasm to help give the world an assurance of their determination to defeat the Kaiser and his gang. Thirteen thousand six hundred and fifty dollars was subscribed for Liberty Loan bonds during that meeting, and Rumford has not a large population. But, best of all, a service flag was lifted high to let that audience see that 102 boys have followed the flag to France."

In Lowell, Mass., there are ten French-Canadians to every one of any other nationality; in some of the New England cities the percentage is even higher than in Lowell; in New Hampshire there are towns where, judging by the advertised names of streets, shops and stores, the inhabitants must be entirely French-Canadian, and in some places French is the only language spoken by most of the people; in Vermont the same is true. But the story of the attitude of the French-Canadian in the United States toward the war against the vicious autocracy of Germany does not change. Even in New York City, where there are 10,000 French-Canadians, there is no difference. At the corner of Seventy-sixth Street and Lexington Avenue, New York, there is the French-Canadian church of Jean Baptiste, in which hundreds of French-Canadians are communicants. The brothers of the church are "for the law which has determined that conscription in the United States must be obeyed." That, too, is the expressed sentiment of thousands of French-Canadians in this city.

On the fields of battle, however, there is only one question with the French-Canadian soldiers, as there is only one with the soldiers of other nations: United in a common cause, the most liberal and the most conservative of them forget their enmities of national policies, and never waver to dare to do and to die for a world democracy. In no spirit of wishing to express a highly flung compliment are the words used. The lists of French-Canadians who have won medals of honor in the war are long; the lists of those among them who have died for the honor of men are longer. Among the crosses of Flanders they "take up the fight"—the French-Canadian men. Back here in the United States their kindred urge them on to prove to the world that there is no braver soldier in the world than the French-Canadian. Are those kindred loyal? Their attitude in the United States is undoubtedly so.

## United in Favor Of Service with U. S.

"It seems very strange that there should be some people who believe that every one who is a French-Canadian must agree, perforce, because of nationality, with Bourassa. That is the wildest kind of delusion," a French-Canadian in New York, a newspaper man, once said. That is true. Quebec with many of these people is a "something else," a question unto itself, as it were, affecting in no way the reasonableness

of their sympathy and allegiance to the laws of this land in which they now live. To some of them, on the other hand, it is not a "something else," and these are bitter in their denunciations of those who hold the other point of view. "Now is a time for all nations to stand together to create a unity and a glorious strength in the line of men who are the bulwark to save civilization. It is a time not for national, but for world vision."

But the French-Canadians are as yet a people divided against themselves on the question of their becoming soldiers in Canada to fight against Germany, and united on the question of their becoming soldiers in the United States to fight against the Germans.

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